

Achievement Report  
2016-2017 – Our 70th year!



# 70 years of children's futures



[www.adoptionmatters.org](http://www.adoptionmatters.org)

# Introduction



Norman G Goodwin CBE  
Chief Executive

**In today's world, business is usually driven by targets and numbers. Whilst we know these are important and should feature in a report such as this, the dictionary would define achievement as something that somebody has succeeded in doing, usually with effort.**

**This report will attempt to satisfy both requirements and hopefully pays tribute to the people who have made the achievements possible with their hard work and endless enthusiasm.**

**76 children placed –**

**the highest number in my tenure at Adoption Matters and indeed the highest number of children placed since 1967**

**76 children placed** – the highest number in my tenure at Adoption Matters and indeed the highest number of children placed since 1967, itself a significant year in adoption history. Three words – **76 children placed** – cannot fully describe the hard work of all the dedicated staff or panel that played their part in each piece of the jigsaw, or the journey taken by the prospective adopters in fitting the jigsaw together.

Significantly **49%** of the children placed were part of a sibling group and **74%** were placed on behalf of Local Authorities with whom we work, in partnership as part of the Regional Adoption Agencies.

Our continuing and developing partnership with Caritas Care in the areas of Concurrency, Adoption Support and Bespoke Family Finding continues to grow. Over 50 children have now been placed as part of the Concurrency Service and over 300 families this year have been offered adoption support as well as over 100 schools. Everyone involved in concurrency has to deal with greater risk and uncertainty and no one should ever underestimate the pressures involved in caring for adopted children.

I always like to acknowledge the contribution of all our supporters, volunteers, Board of Trustees and staff without whose efforts, our achievements would not be possible. I would particularly like to pay tribute to Gwen Laird who retired during this year for her enthusiasm and tireless work with Blackburn Diocesan Adoption Agency and for the last 10 years with Adoption Matters.

I would also like to pay tribute to Revd. Stanley “Stan” Winton whose sage and encouraging words were always appreciated by prospective adopters as well as the Chief Executive. Stan you will be sadly missed and our condolences go to all your family.

Next year will no doubt require even greater effort by the team as we embark on some new opportunities as well as anticipating some challenging changes in personnel, but with your help and support we can continue to make adoption matter over the next 70 years.



Professor David Cracknell, OBE  
Chair, Board of Trustees

This last year for Adoption Matters is rightly regarded as a success story – not entirely and not completely but nevertheless a very good year. Against the odds, Adoption Matters has maintained its momentum in building high quality services upon enduring values and integrity, demonstrating consistently professional skills and commitment. More children and families than ever before have been brought together, encouraged and equipped to sustain lasting relationships that bring safety, hope, love, peace and joy... That is really good news but it is not good enough.



The Board of Adoption Matters is delighted that last year's achievements are being recognised and celebrated but we also see them as one part of a sequence – stepping stones to survival and foundations for long-term success. Looking ahead we might yearn for a stable, or at least more predictable, social, political and economic environment, within which high quality adoptions are easier to achieve for more children and young people. In practice, we are likely to face continuing volatility in the funding and national policy for adoption and family support. The climate will be tough for all adoption agencies. Adoption Matters has the advantage of a strong historic legacy, an outstanding reputation and a shared sense of purpose among its staff and trustees. We look to the future, uncertain as it is, with excitement and we are determined to anticipate, innovate, shape and adapt. We want our organisation to continue to be a resilient and dynamic high achiever in providing, for children and families, outstanding services that are fit for purpose.

None of this will be possible without the people who make up the Adoption Matters family and partnerships. We are indebted to them all for their commitment of thinking, ideas, time and energy. Norman Goodwin has once again played a key role in securing the achievements that are celebrated in this report. Special thanks also go to Alan Rowntree who retired this year. Alan played a vital role as a trustee and treasurer of the Blackburn Diocesan Adoption Agency from the late 1970s. He was a key architect of the merger that produced Adoption Matters North West and the lead trustee for finance with Adoption Matters. Alan has contributed enormously to the development of the agency with his professional skills, calmness and wisdom.

One of the best ways in which readers of this report could help us achieve more is to ask us some good questions. These could be the start of conversations that lead us to learn better. We would encourage you to be actively involved with us, however you can.

# Our Achievements

April 2016–March 2017

↑ 76

children placed with adoptive families



✓ 42

new adopters approved



37

We worked with 37 local authority adoption teams across the UK



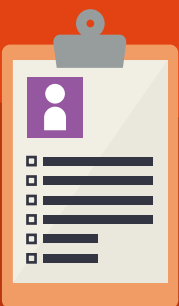
57

prospective adopters attended our preparation groups



64

adoption orders granted



49%

of children placed were in a sibling group

3yrs old

is the average age of children we placed

14 sibling groups of 2 and 3 sibling groups of 3



## The NW Concurrent Planning Service

1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

No of LA's worked with:	16
No of children placed:	21
No of adoption orders:	15
No of approved Concurrent Carers:	17

*"There's definitely life after a baby returns to their birth family. My concurrency placement was an invaluable learning experience. It helped me to grow. It taught me about selflessness. And it helped to prepare me for my next placement. After a six month's break and once again weighing up the pros and cons of traditional adoption vs Concurrency, I'm ready to climb aboard the concurrency roller coaster again."*

Concurrent Carer who wrote a blog sharing her experiences titled 'Surviving and thriving after baby returned to birth family' which is available to read at: [www.adoptionmatters.org/blogs](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/blogs)



## The Centre for Adoption Support

1 April 2016 – 31 March 2017

Families Worked with :	304
Referrals from Local Authority:	159
No of consultations:	129
No of workshops:	44
Workshop Attendees:	714

### Centre for Adoption Support Service Manager Delyth Evans Awarded Adoption Support Practitioner of the Year

Delyth was named as Adoption Support Practitioner of the Year at the First4Adoption National Adoption Week Awards held in London in October 2016. Delyth has worked within children's services for over 30 years and for the last 10 years, within the field of Adoption Support. By the end of the first 2 years of the centre's operation, Delyth and her team had considerably exceeded all targets and expectations and she was recently invited to share the centres model within both Wales and Northern Ireland. Congratulations to Delyth on this fantastic achievement.

Pictured Delyth with Award Presenter TV personality Clare Grogan and Edward Timpson who was then the Minister of State for Children and Families





# Our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

## Business Plan & Strategy 2017-19

This year sees the beginning of a new strategic planning cycle for the agency. Over recent years the adoption sector has faced an increasingly fast-paced and changing environment in terms of policy, procedures, external requirements and not least the social and political landscape. It has become increasingly difficult to forecast where we will be in three year's time.

With this in mind, we have elected to move to a 2-yearly planning cycle which will allow us to plan in some detail for the first 12 months and outline our ambitions for direction of travel in year 2 and beyond. We will review progress annually and amend our plans according to current conditions in the sector.

This strategy was developed through a process of full consultation with our staff, trustees and panel members and represents the ambitions of the agency as a whole. We will be measuring our success against four key themes which are outlined below:

### Key Themes

Quality & Reputation	<p><b>We aim to be the number 1 agency of choice for all areas (both geographical and practice based) we cover.</b></p> <p>We are committed to ensuring that quality is at the heart of all our activities and that we provide the best possible service to our families, taking their views and requirements into account at every stage and finding new ways to improve their experience. We maintain and regularly review robust policies and procedures for all areas of our work, including safeguarding &amp; child protection, data protection, health &amp; safety and equal opportunities.</p>
Innovation	<p><b>We will be creative and ambitious in all areas of our work and our plans for children including development of recruitment, assessment and matching practices.</b></p> <p>We aim to be a dynamic and innovative organisation that anticipates and responds to the changing environment to develop and deliver the very best in Adoption and Adoption Support. We are proactive in seeking new opportunities that enhance our service as well as responsive to the demands of the sector.</p>
Approachable, friendly & collaborative	<p><b>We will ensure our services are adopter led where possible and seek new ways of incorporating the adopter voice and the views of adopted children in service design.</b></p> <p>We strive to be a welcoming, compassionate and inclusive service, whose ethos is based on principles of fairness, equality and respect. From the first point of contact and throughout our work we are with you through thick and thin to achieve the best outcomes for children and families.</p> <p>We undertake much of our work in partnership with other Voluntary Adoption Agencies both regionally and nationally as well Regional Adoption Agencies in the region and beyond and other charitable and faith based organisations. We believe that through collaboration and partnership we can achieve better permanent outcomes for all children and families.</p>

### Key Themes

#### Professionalism

**We aim to maintain and develop our staff team, trustees and panel members to ensure all our families receive consistently excellent service and support.**

Underpinning the agency's success is our highly qualified, experienced and knowledgeable staff team comprising adoption practitioners, managers, administrative, finance, HR, business development and related professional staff. Our committed, reliable team help ensure consistency and quality throughout periods of growth and transition.

We are also fortunate to receive support from a large number of volunteers, including our Board of Trustees and Adoption Panel Members who help us ensure that our practice is grounded, responsive and accountable.

## Our Values

In addition, all our activities are underpinned by a strong commitment to the following core values and principles:

#### Ethical

As an organisation that has its roots in the Church Of England Diocesan Adoption Services, we maintain Christian values and ethics within the work we do whilst embracing all other faiths and those with no faith.

#### Inclusive

We strive to ensure equality of opportunity, both for our adoptive families and amongst our staff and Trustees regardless of gender, race, creed, age or sexuality.

#### Honest And Fair

We undertake to treat every case fairly on its individual merits and to be honest and realistic in all our communications.

#### Flexible

We aim to continually develop and improve our services and increase engagement with our service users, using their feedback and suggestions to inform future developments.

#### Celebrating Difference

We work within a culture of respect and acceptance, treating everyone who comes to us for support or advice fairly, professionally and with complete confidentiality.



# The Team

<b>Chief Executive:</b> <b>Norman G. Goodwin CBE</b>	<b>Panel members:</b> <b>Janet Bodie</b> <b>Beverley Burke</b> <b>Julie Clark</b> <b>Ronan Connell</b> <b>Sara Dubois</b> (Medical advisor) <b>Robert Dutton</b> <b>Wendy Feast</b> <b>Hazel Field</b> Chester Vice-Chair <b>Nicola Fielden</b> Blackburn Vice-Chair <b>Marjorie Hearton</b> (retired 2016) <b>George Hobbs</b> (Medical advisor) <b>Rachel James</b> <b>Rosemary Jones</b> Chester Chair <b>Sara Jones</b> <b>Yasmin Kauser</b> <b>Mohamed Matadar</b> <b>Debbie Stoddard</b> <b>Sue Stratton-Symes</b> (left 2017) <b>Fiona Taylor</b> <b>Mike Thomas</b> (left 2016) <b>Peter Young</b> Blackburn Chair	<b>Advisers:</b> <b>Hanif Dudwhala</b> Muslim Welfare Adviser <b>Andrew Larkin</b> Human Resources <b>Daphne Jordan</b> Education <b>Andrew Perrigo</b> Legal	<b>Adoption Practitioners:</b> <b>Nicola Abedin</b> <b>Bernadette Bailey</b> <b>Liz Boulter</b> <b>Lisa Bryan</b> <b>Helen Cheetham</b> <b>Patricia Dalton</b> <b>Alexis Draper</b> <b>Karen Ferguson</b> (retired 2016) <b>Hazel Field</b> <b>Ruth Froggatt</b> <b>Sarah Grant</b> <b>Victoria Hargreaves</b> <b>Sharon Hesketh</b> <b>Amanda Houton</b> <b>Furzana Ibrahim</b> <b>Nigel Johnson</b> <b>Sarah Jones</b> <b>Roxanne McGough</b> <b>Linda McNeill</b> <b>Linda Mullineaux</b> (retired 2017) <b>Ian Pearson</b> <b>David Robinson-Field</b> <b>Claire Roscoe</b> <b>Debbie Smith</b> <b>Aileen Somerset</b> <b>Ronnie Sumner</b> <b>Hedwig Verhagen</b> <b>Joanne Whitworth</b> <b>Kelly Wise</b>	<b>Social Work Assistants:</b> <b>Sally Broadhurst</b> <b>Pip Jones</b>	<b>Adoption Administrators:</b> <b>Jackie Rixon</b> Senior Adoption Administrator <b>Lynn Scott</b> Senior Adoption Administrator <b>Charlotte Davies</b> <b>Loraine Exton</b> <b>Rebecca Harding</b> <b>Hannah Martin</b> <b>Amy Massey</b> <b>Nikki Raistrick</b> <b>Lisa Waller</b> (left 2017) <b>Kathryn Westbrook</b>
<b>Presidents:</b> <b>The Right Reverend Dr. Peter Forster</b> Bishop of Chester <b>The Right Reverend Julian Henderson</b> Bishop of Blackburn		<b>Social Work Team:</b> <b>Ann Davison</b> Service Manager <b>Paul Dolan</b> Service Manager <b>Delyth Evans</b> Service Manager <b>Gwen Laird</b> (retired 2016) Team Manager <b>Clive Gumbrell</b> Practice Manager <b>Julie Hogan</b> Practice Manager <b>Sally Frances</b> Practice Manager <b>Amreen Riaz</b> Practice Manager <b>Jacqui Shore</b> Practice Manager <b>Deborah Stoddard</b> Practice Manager <b>Fiona Taylor</b> Practice Manager	<b>Business Development &amp; Marketing:</b> <b>Gaynor Richards</b> Business Development Manager <b>Jenny Macquire</b> Marketing Manager <b>Rachel Walker</b> (left 2016) Marketing and Fundraising Assistant	<b>Business Section Team:</b> <b>Susy White</b> Finance & Operations Director <b>Karen Davies</b> Business & Office Manager <b>Diane Handley</b> HR Manager <b>Shirley Sheen</b> HR & Finance Officer <b>Emma Price</b> Administration Process Officer <b>Hafina Thomas</b> Administration Team Officer <b>Sophie Challinor</b> (left 2017) PA to Chief Executive <b>Sam Sole</b> PA to Chief Executive <b>Kerry Sommerton</b> Finance Administrator <b>Bev Theobald</b> Finance Administrator	



# In Memory of



## Reverend Stanley Wootton Winton

15 January 1930 - 20 June 2017

Stan who was a member of the adoption panel for many years and will be sadly missed.

10

years  
of service

## Farewell to Gwen Laird

Sadly, we also said goodbye to Gwen Laird, Blackburn Team Manager who retired after 10 years service. Gwen originally joined Blackburn Diocese Adoption Agency before merging to become Adoption Matters in 2007.

We wish Gwen all the very best in her retirement.



## Our Blackburn team go home

After many years in temporary offices in the Town Centre of Blackburn, the Blackburn team moved into their new prestigious offices at Blackburn Cathedral in 2016.

As we celebrate our 70th year in 2017, we are delighted to be back 'at home' in the Blackburn Cathedral where the staff can now enjoy the beautiful views & surroundings of the newly refurbished Cathedral Quarter.



Some of the Blackburn Team



The Blackburn Cathedral



# Events

## National Adoption Week 2016

National Adoption Week 2016 aim was to encompass all aspects of adoption, to demystify and clarify the adoption process, reflect the challenges of adoptive parenting, share individual stories, showcase and signpost to best practice and invite anyone whose life or heart is touched by it to **#SupportAdoption**

We had our very own ‘selfie wall’ and invited staff, Trustee’s, partners and our adopters to help us share the message and to **#SupportAdoption**. During the week we reached a wide audience through our social media channels.

## We partnered with Adopt North West

We partnered with 22 North West local authorities and 2 other independent adoption agencies on the Adopt North West recruitment campaign.

Chief Executive, Norman Goodwin CBE, is one of the campaigns media spokespersons commented:

*“This collaborative working with our local authority colleagues will help reduce children’s wait for their forever family. The campaign highlights our on-going recruitment need for this group of children who may wait longer for their adoptive home”*

The campaign ran national TV and radio adverts throughout February and March 2016.



*“This collaborative working with our LA colleagues will help reduce children’s wait for their forever family.”*

Chief Executive,  
Norman Goodwin CBE

Norman Goodwin  
with Jen Yates &  
Krish Kandiah from  
Home for Good



Adopters  
Michael &  
Les



55,000  
visitors

## Christmas Tree Festival

We took part in the Christmas Tree Festival at Chester Cathedral which included a display of 50 6ft Christmas trees. Close to 55,000 people visited the festival.

Our Christmas tree was a representation of the 64 children Adoption Matters placed for adoption in the previous year with each child or sibling group represented with their own heart with their initials and ages. Many of our families visited the festival and advised it was very moving to see their own special heart.



A representation  
of the **64 children**  
Adoption Matters  
placed for  
adoption

## Home for Good Partnership goes from strength to strength

Home for Good is a charity that exists to put fostering and adoption on the agenda of the Church. They raise awareness, encourage people to consider fostering and adoption, and inspire and equip churches to better support families that foster and adopt.

Our partnership with Home for Good has enabled the agency’s profile to be established in a wider network of churches and national events, such as Adoption Sunday, which involved 350 churches simultaneously running events. Home for Good’s mission blends well with our own aims to find families for specific hard to place children.



# Centre for Adoption Support

## Swimming school gets attachment friendly

The Centre for Adoption Support teamed up with national swimming school Puddle Ducks to help train all their teachers the importance of attachment for children who have been in care.

Puddle Ducks currently teach over 18,000 babies, toddlers, pre-school and primary school children across the UK every week and wanted to ensure their teachers are trained to care for children from all backgrounds.

Puddle Ducks' Technical Director Ali Beckman commented:

*"We worked closely with the Centre's specialist adoption staff to develop a training module for our staff on the importance of attachment for children who have been in care. This will apply to children who are now in adoptive or fostering placements. The module is now a mandatory part of teacher training and we are proud that all 300 of our swimming teachers have now completed the module".*

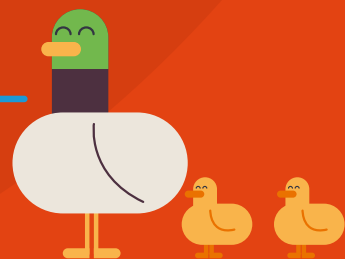
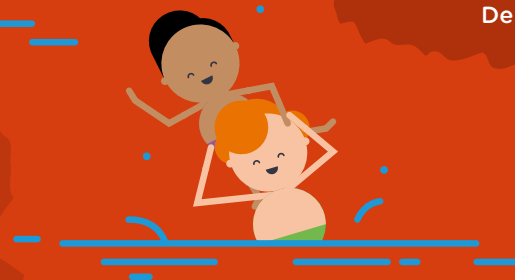


Puddle Ducks' Technical Director Ali Beckman and Delyth Evans.



*"All 300 of our swimming teachers have now completed the module"*

Puddle Ducks' Technical Director Ali Beckman



## The CFAS Choir was launched

The Centre for Adoption Support choir was established and grew from 9 members to its current fantastic 33. Members ages range from 5 to 57 and all members are either adopted, have adopted siblings or parents in the adoption profession! The choir practice sessions were held on Friday evenings where members grew from being a little nervous at first, to singing solos and belting out songs.

*"After some friendly introductions and some vocal warm ups, led by the fabulous Rosie, we are transformed into popstars within the hour. You can physically see kids grow in confidence and self esteem and parents let go and throw themselves into it. I had forgotten the value of singing and its benefits. More importantly, I had forgotten just how supportive it feels to be with people who accept you and your child for who they are and have so much invested in your happiness and well being. It's like having your own cheer leading team, who are just thrilled that you are there.*

*Thank you CFAS. Another great support group within a really fun activity".*

A parent who attended the choir with their child.

*"You can physically see kids grow in confidence and self esteem and parents let go and throw themselves into it"*

A parent who attended the choir with their child





Summary Financial Statements  
Statement of Financial Position

31 March 2017 Adoption Matters	2017 (£)	2016 (£)
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible assets	172,072	164,162
Investments	400,009	403,896
	<u>572,081</u>	<u>568,058</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	589,417	929,639
Cash at bank	1,478,537	917,720
	<u>2,067,954</u>	<u>1,847,359</u>
<b>CREDITORS</b>		
Amounts falling due within one year	(565,541)	(365,376)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>1,502,413</u>	<u>1,481,983</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS BEFORE PENSION DEFICIT</b>	2,074,494	2,050,041
Pension scheme liability	(879,000)	(227,000)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>1,195,494</u>	<u>1,823,041</u>
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	2,074,494	2,050,041
<b>LESS: PENSION SCHEME LIABILITY</b>	<u>(879,000)</u>	<u>(227,000)</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<u>1,195,494</u>	<u>1,823,041</u>

These accounts are a summary of the information extracted from the annual accounts which were approved by the members of the Board on 18th August 2017 and are signed on their behalf by:

Professor David Cracknell OBE, Trustee  
Mr Annesley Wright, Trustee

Independent Auditor's Statement

To the members, Adoption Matters

We have examined the summarised accounts set out on these pages. You are responsible as Board members for the preparation of the summarised accounts.

We have agreed to report to you our opinion on the summarised accounts' consistency with the full accounts on the which we reported to you on 22nd August 2017.

We have carried out the procedures we consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised accounts are consistent with the full accounts from which they have been prepared.

In our opinion, the summarised accounts are consistent with the full accounts for the year ended 31 March 2017.

Statement of Financial Activities (Including  
Income and Expenditure Account)

31 March 2017 Adoption Matters	Total Funds 2017 (£)	Total Funds 2016 (£)
<b>INCOME</b>		
Donations and legacies	38,592	27,412
Charitable activities	2,759,588	3,189,979
Other trading activities	3,979	5,522
Investments	8,640	8,293
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<u>2,810,799</u>	<u>3,231,206</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Raising funds	21,138	35,772
Charitable activities	2,765,208	3,010,554
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<u>2,786,346</u>	<u>3,046,326</u>
<b>NET INCOME / EXPENDITURE</b>	24,453	184,880
<b>OTHER RECOGNISED GAINS / LOSSES</b>		
Actuarial gains/losses on pension scheme	(652,000)	822,000
<b>NET INCOME/ (EXPENDITURE) FOR YEAR</b>	<u>(627,547)</u>	<u>1,006,880</u>

The summarised accounts on these pages are an abridged version of the full accounts of Adoption Matters, which are filed with the Registrar of Companies and the Charities Commission.

The Auditors' report on the full accounts was unqualified. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of the Charity.

For further information, the full accounts, the Auditor's Report on these accounts and the Board of Trustees' Report should be consulted. Copies of these are available, 14 Liverpool Road, Chester CH2 1AE.

# Fundraising

A thank you to all of our supporters and fundraisers in the last year of which there have been many. We were delighted to receive a surprise donation of £750 from The Entertainer Toy Store. Our adopters, who adopted their little girl through the agency, nominated the charity to receive a donation through The Entertainer's Jack Gives Back initiative supported by Pennies – the digital charity box.

£750  
donation

Adopter Stephen, commented:

*"It is an absolute pleasure to nominate Adoption Matters. The team there did so much for our family, it's great to be able to give back"*



# How can you help us?

There are many ways in which you can support our charity, one of them being to make a direct donation. We welcome all donations, however big or small and every penny is used to provide essential support for children and families.

To give you an example of how your funds can help:

## £5

buys a toy for young children to play with at a Concurrent Planning contact session

## £35

buys a teddy bear empathy doll, designed to help strengthen a child's bonding through sensory stimuli

## £100

provides a place for an adoptive parent on a therapeutic parenting training day

## £400

provides an adoptive family a full consultation session with our adoptive professionals



## £1,000

offers a parenting programme, training workshop or online course to a family in need

Every penny of your donations **matter**. Especially at this crucial stage of our agency growth and development.

If you would like to walk, run, bake, skydive, climb mountains or become a regular donor, please do get in touch. Visit:

[www.adoptionmatters.org/donate](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/donate) or call us on 01244 390 938



# Social Media

We would encourage you to like and follow our social media pages at:

 [@Adopt\\_Matters](https://twitter.com/Adopt_Matters)

 [/Adoptionmattersuk](https://www.facebook.com/Adoptionmattersuk)

As well as keeping you up to date with all the latest news and views from the agency, you can help us reach a wider audience by liking, sharing and re-tweeting. Re-tweets and shares from 'real' people go much further and have more influence than ourselves sharing so you really can make a difference.

A big thank you to our Social Media Champions, our families who blog, tweet and post about adoption and our agency helping us to spread the message far and wide! Our bloggers can be found at:

[www.adoptionmatters.org/blogs](http://www.adoptionmatters.org/blogs)



Re-tweets and shares from 'real' people go much further







---

### Adoption Matters

Registered office:

14 Liverpool Road,  
Chester, CH2 1AE

**Tel:** 01244 390 938

**Fax:** 01244 390 067

**All enquiries:** 0300 123 1066

**Email:** [info@adoptionmatters.org](mailto:info@adoptionmatters.org)

### Also offices at:

Blackburn, Hale, Salford,  
Warrington & Leeds.

---

**[www.adoptionmatters.org](http://www.adoptionmatters.org)**

CHARITY REGISTERED NUMBER: 512892

Rated 'Outstanding' by Ofsted



Members of:



BAAF Voluntary  
Adoption Agency  
of the Year 2012 & 2014